📓 Lecture Notes: *Social Stratification*

(Source:)

🔷 1. What is Social Stratification? (CORE)

- **Social stratification** = ranking of people based on:
  - Wealth
  - Power
  - Prestige

👉 Exists in **ALL societies**

🔷 2. Why It Matters (VERY IMPORTANT)

- Affects **life chances**:
  - Education
  - Income
  - Health
  - Opportunities

👉 Key idea:
🔲 Inequality = different life outcomes

🔷 3. Open vs Closed Systems

Closed System

- No mobility
- You stay where you're born

Open System

- Can move up or down
- More opportunity

👉 Example:

- Caste = closed
- Class = more open

🔷 4. Systems of Stratification (MEMORIZE ORDER ☆)

1. Slavery (MOST CLOSED)

- People are **owned**
- No rights

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2. Estate System

- Based on **land ownership**
- Two main groups:
    - Nobility
    - Peasants

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3. Caste System

- Born into status
- Cannot change
- Example: India

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4. Class System (MOST OPEN)

- Based on:
    - Wealth
    - Skills
    - Education

👉 Allows **social mobility**

🔷 5. Theorists (VERY IMPORTANT)

Karl Marx ☆

- Society divided into:
    - **Bourgeoisie (rich)**
    - **Proletariat (workers)**

👉 Focus:

- **Economic inequality**

Max Weber ☆

- Stratification based on:
    1. **Wealth (class)**
    2. **Power**
    3. **Prestige**

👉 More complex than Marx

🔷 6. Theories of Stratification

A. Functionalist Theory

- Stratification is:
    - **Necessary**
    - **Inevitable**

Why?

- Important jobs need:
    - Skills
    - Incentives (money, rewards)

👉 Example:

- Doctors paid more to motivate training

⚠ Criticism:

- Ignores inequality & unfairness

B. Conflict Theory (VERY IMPORTANT ☆)

- Stratification = result of:
    - Inequality
    - Power

    - Exploitation

👉 Rich stay rich, poor stay poor

Key ideas:

- Laws favor the powerful
- Inequality is NOT necessary

Ideology (IMPORTANT)

- Beliefs that justify inequality

Examples:

- “American Dream”
    - If you’re poor → your fault

👉 Leads to:

- **False consciousness** (people don’t see inequality clearly)

C. Symbolic Interactionism

- Focus: everyday life

👉 Stratification affects:

- Behavior
- Identity
- Interactions

🔷 7. Key Concepts

Social Mobility

- Movement up/down social ladder

Life Chances

- Opportunities based on class

Inequality

- Unequal distribution of resources

🔷 8. Big Picture

👉 Stratification exists because of:

- Economic systems
- Power differences
- Social structures

👉 It affects:

- EVERYTHING in life

□ FINAL “MUST MEMORIZE” LIST ☆

1. Social stratification definition
2. Life chances
3. Open vs closed systems
4. 4 systems (slavery → estate → caste → class)
5. Marx vs Weber
6. Functionalist theory
7. Conflict theory
8. Ideology & false consciousness
9. Social mobility